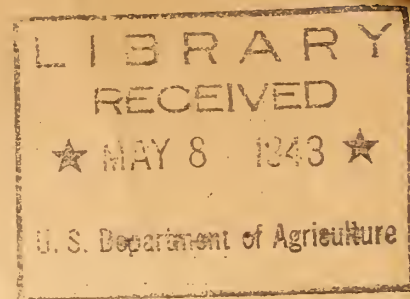


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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
U.S. FOOD DISTRIBUTION ADMINISTRATION
Great Lakes Region
5 South Wabash Avenue
Chicago, Illinois



RATION ARITHMETIC FOR SPONSORS OF SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAMS*

Compiled by Regional Nutrition Advisor
Great Lakes Region

Sponsors of School Lunch Programs studying "Ration Arithmetic" to buy point-rationed foods correctly, can get great help in wise food buying by paying close attention to another important "R"--"Right Food," or in other words, food selected to make up balanced school lunches. There is vital need now to put to work every sound fact about nutrition.

To adjust to food shortages and point rationing: First of all, keep in the back of your mind--not too far back, what the right food does. Briefed--the right food builds and repairs the body...keeps it in good running order...gives energy for work, and other activities...helps prolong the prime of life...is a basis for good health.

When having to fall back on fewer kinds of foods, get help from the plan of a well-balanced diet based on the yardstick of good nutrition, and remember that the good school lunch should provide at least one-third of the day's needs. Because the plan calls for foods mostly by groups, there is much leeway for war-time adjustments. Following is the plan, with some suggestions for the present situation:

Milk--has always started the list; is the hardest item to "adjust". Milk is an outstanding source of minerals for building strong bones and teeth, and has so many other values that it is practically impossible to find a group of foods to take over its duties. When there is less milk available, children - and prospective and nursing mothers, of course - have first call on the supply. Don't overlook the fact that milk has varied forms--fluid, dried, evaporated, in cheese--if one kind is not available, another may serve.

Tomatoes, citrus fruit, or other vitamin-C-rich food--there are many sources of this vitamin in foods. Look around for oranges or grapefruit. If you have a small amount of tomato juice to serve, a squeeze of lemon juice will run up the vitamin C value, for lemon is a rich source. And speaking of lemon, now is a time to quit using lemon--or parsley or other good food--as a garnish, often thrown away at the end of a meal.

Say "vitamin C" to many people, and they think only of citrus fruit and tomatoes, though there are other fruits and vegetables that are good sources; raw cabbage, for instance, and various salad greens. And potatoes can be depended on for vitamin C, provided you eat plenty and cook them in their jackets.

Leafy, green, or yellow vegetables--daily food plans used to call for "one or more" servings. Now, and until victory gardens come into bearing, one a day may be the more usual goal. This group of vegetables contributes to your Vitamin C, and particularly to your vitamin A, needed for normal sight and healthy skin.

This group includes a wide range of more or less interchangeable foods, such as kale, turnip greens, beet tops, collards, and other leafy foods, broccoli, green beans, green peas, carrots, squash. If you can't get one, look for another.

Other vegetables or fruit--two or more servings are advocated in the yardstick plan. Here fit in your potatoes and apples and other fresh food available. Call on your point ration book to piece out only if you have to. And be thrifty with your month's coupons. They have to last out the month.

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, sometimes dried beans or peas, soybeans, cheese, nuts-- here are main dish foods rich in protein which the body needs for building and repairing tissues. They have values, too in vitamins and minerals.

Wartime suggestion: Don't double in protein any more than need be. Foods supplying protein are too scarce and valuable as a group. Cheese is not a tidbit at meal's end, or a careless snack--not now. Make it a part of the day's protein supply. The season for more abundant eggs is ahead--a cheering note. As for dried beans and peas, a pound makes a main dish for six.

Cereals and bread--grain products will have to carry more of the load in feeding the Nation. At least two servings of whole grain or "enriched" products a day, the diet plan has included. That may be stepped up now.

All grain products give you caloric value of energy. Whole grain products carry vitamins and minerals, as well as iron and phosphorus, and B vitamins, thiamine, niacin, and riboflavin. By recent food order, enrichment of all white bread and flour is required, and soon riboflavin will be added to B vitamins, thiamine and niacin, already in "enriched" products, all of which help in getting an adequate diet.

Grain foods need not be monotonous; there are many kinds. A cereal dish once a day, sometimes twice, is good meal planning in any kitchen and especially now. A cereal dish may be morning porridge, hot cakes, macaroni, spaghetti, hominy grits, pudding, rolled oats cookies. And grain foods combine well with such flavorful foods as meat or cheese, to make flavor go farther. Grain foods do not take the place of meat or vegetables, but they can help to make up for some vitamin and mineral values.

Fats--those are limited, so don't double in fats. The amount needed in a day's diet to make food palatable is at least two tablespoons--a point to keep in mind if very close economy is required. Foremost appeal of fats is their appetizing flavor. And next, they are valued for the stick-to-the-ribs quality they give to a meal. The day's fat supply could come from varied sources, such as butter, enriched margarine, cream, lard or other shortening, fat in meat, vegetable oil, or fats saved in cooking meat.

*Adapted from material in "The Market Basket" - Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, Agricultural Research Administration, (March 4, 1943)